Environmental Impact Assessment Notification

2944. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the status of the Draft Environmental Impact Assessment Notifications of August, 2005;

(b) whether any process of consultation was followed before the framing of EIA Notifications and whether his Ministry has undertaken any review of 1994 EIA Rules; and

(c) if so, what are the salient features of the review and whether his Ministry will table the report of the said review in Parliament?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) The Draft Notification on the revised environmental clearance process issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forests on 15th September, 2005 is yet to be finalized. The responses received from various stakeholders are under examination.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Draft Notification dated 15th September, 2005 was an outcome of the comprehensive review of the existing Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 1994 and Environmental Clearance Process undertaken by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, recommendations for the regulatory reforms by the Govindarajan Committee constituted by the Central Government for reforming investment approval and implementation procedures, detailed consultations with the State Environment Ministers, State Environment Secretaries, concerned Central Government Ministries/Departments, Non-Government Organization and Industry Associations.

The Draft Notification as and when it is finalized and issued in the Gazette of India will be laid on the Table of both the Houses of Parliament as per parliamentary procedures.

Plastic bags

†2945. SHRI GIRISH KUMAR SANGHI:
DR. PRABHA THAKUR:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether manufacturing and use of plastic is harmful for environment and health;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether plastic bags convert fertile soil into barren; and

(c) if so, the steps Government are taking to check the manufacturing and use of plastic and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) Plastics are polymers of long-chain hydrocarbons derived from Petroleum. They are chemically inert or neutral and used for the manufacture of a large number of consumer items and can be recycled. Plastics by themselves are not harmful. Only the indiscriminate littering of plastics and environmentally unsound recycling practices has the potential to cause adverse impacts on environment and health. Plastic bags are generally made of polyethylene and are non-biodegradable.

(c) A set of rules entitled the Recycled Plastics Manufacture and Usage Rules, 1999 amended 2003 has been brought out to regulate the usage of plastic carry bags and to encourage collection of wastes. These rules prescribe that only virgin plastic material be used for storing, carrying, dispensing, or packaging of foodstuffs. These rules also prohibit the manufacture, stocking, distribution or selling of carry bags made of virgin/ recycled plastics, which are below 8 x 12 inches in size and 20 microns in thickness.

Exemption of SEZs and EPZs from submitting EIA reports

2946. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the SEZs and EPZs below 50 hectares were exempted from submitting the environment impact assessment reports;

(b) if so, what are the reasons for this exemption;

(c) the list of exempted SEZs and EPZs and also the effects of this on the livelihood security of the people in that area, State-wise; and

(d) whether Government would take a holistic view in safeguarding the livelihood at the time of allowing construction and industrial activities?